

16 • THE VILLAGE: AS A SETTING

245 back, remarks that pruning is especially hard work because it is the first job in  
221 spring after the winter's rest, and usually finishes by saying, "What can we do?  
Wine is good, but it takes hard work."

484 The movement of people in and out of Vasilika is not dependent on the  
574 agricultural cycle alone. I have already mentioned the visits of vendors, traders,  
527 and government officials to the village. Each saint's day brings some visitors to  
[553] Vasilika, for the men and boys of the village celebrate the birthday of the saint  
after whom they were named, and not their own birthdays. On St. George's Day,  
for example, relatives who live in surrounding villages come to visit the George  
in Vasilika who is kin to them. The number of the visitors on these days is thus  
directly related to the number of men and boys in the village who have been  
baptized with the name of the saint being honored. On St. John's Day, St.  
George's Day, and St. Constantine's Day, for example, there are many visitors  
to Vasilika. There is no one named Spiros or Petros in the village, so that St.  
Spiridon's Day and St. Peter's Day bring no visitors at all.

484 The periods of greatest density of population in the village are the two  
574 or three days of *paniyiri* (the patron saints' day festival), when relatives and  
796 strangers by the hundreds come to the village for the festivities, and Christmas  
and Easter, when those who formerly lived in Vasilika return to their *patridha*  
for a few days. Vasilika is least fully populated in midsummer when individuals  
and families attend the *paniyiria* of other villages in the region. They usually  
choose those villages in which they have relatives, and stay for a few days. At  
[361] this season, also, some families go to watering places for a week or two, or  
camp on Parnassos to avoid the heat of Vasilika.

• 481 The arhythmic quality of the movement of people, animals, and vehicles  
[484] through the village has been described. It now remains to say that the pace of  
movement is always slow even when it is most purposeful. No one strides briskly  
along the road or paths of the village; only children are ever seen running. The  
pace seems to be set by the slow walk of a loaded horse or mule or donkey. The  
villagers take the long leisurely strides they need to accompany these pack ani-  
mals, whenever they go from place to place, even when they walk without them.  
[461] Slow action is characteristic also of the performance of any task. No one is ever  
in a hurry. Women cook and serve with efficiency but without speed; men load a  
horse equally efficiently but again without speed. Their movements are con-  
trolled, and the exercise of that control gives an impression of vitality, of a  
tenseness which makes the slowness a sign of power and deliberation, never of  
lassitude or indifference.

621 When a visitor returns to Vasilika, he may ask, "*Ti nea?*" "What's  
178 new?" He often receives the quasi-rhyming response "*Ischia*," "All quiet." The  
[576] response means "The round of life is going on as usual. Besides, nothing much  
ever happens in this place, anyway." And in some sense, the villagers actually  
believe what they say. The village is the physical center of the lives of the in-  
habitants; in spite of their trips out of it, and the coming of visitors to the  
village, the people of Vasilika see and talk to their fellow villagers more fre-  
quently than they see and talk to nonvillagers. They even express considerable  
satisfaction with some of the obvious village-wide changes of the last few years